

ACCRA COST OF LIVING INDEX

Among the 294 urban areas participating in the first quarter 2005 *ACCRA Cost of Living Index*, the after-tax cost for a professional/managerial **standard of living ranged from more than twice the national average in New York (Manhattan) NY to more than 20 percent below the national average in McAlester OK.** The *ACCRA Cost of Living Index* is compiled and published quarterly by ACCRA, an association of community and economic development research professionals.

The Ten Most and Least Expensive Urban Areas in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index (COLI)

First Quarter 2005

National Average for 294 Urban Areas = 100

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index
1	New York (Manhattan) NY	203.9	1	McAlester OK	77.8
2	San Francisco CA	178.7	2	McAllen TX	83.1
3	San Jose CA	167.2	3	Salina KS	83.7
4	Honolulu HI	156.9	4	Conway AR	84.0
5	Los Angeles-Long Beach CA	153.7	5	Paris TX	84.4
6	Orange County CA	152.8	6	Joplin MO	84.4
7	Oakland CA	150.7	7	Douglas GA	84.8
8	Stamford CT	148.0	8	Clarksville TN	85.0
9	San Diego CA	146.9	9	Tupelo MS	85.1
10	Nassau County NY	144.1	10	Jonesboro AR	85.3

The *ACCRA Cost of Living Index* measures regional differences in the cost of consumer goods and services, excluding taxes and non-consumer expenditures, for professional and managerial households in the top income quintile. It is based on more than 50,000 prices covering almost 60 different items for which prices are collected quarterly by chambers of commerce, economic development organizations or university applied economic centers in each participating urban area. Small differences should not be interpreted as showing a measurable difference.

The composite index is based on six components – housing, utilities, grocery items, transportation, health care and miscellaneous goods and services.

Where is the least expensive prescription drug?

Each quarter, ACCRA collects more than 50,000 prices from communities across the US and Canada for the COLI. This quarter, ACCRA features the communities with the most and least expensive prescription drug item. ACCRA collected data on Lipitor® (atorvastatin calcium), a cholesterol lowering drug. Prices were gathered from pharmacy counters, including grocery stores and other retail outlets. The prices reflect cost without insurance coverage for thirty 20mg tablets.

**The Five Most and Least Expensive Places to Buy a Prescription Drug
in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index (COLI)
First Quarter 2005
Average for 294 Urban Areas = \$114.28**

Most Expensive			Least Expensive		
Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index	Ranking	Urban Areas	COL Index
1	San Francisco CA	134.74	1	Vancouver BC	60.55
2	Honolulu HI	131.31	2	Kelowna BC	67.77
3	Juneau AK	130.39	3	Murray KY	96.00
4	Gillette WY	129.95	4	Los Alamos NM	97.19
5	Bethesda-Gaithersburg-Frederick MD	129.01	5	Ames IA	100.64

A Closer Look at California

California cities frequently rate among the most expensive in the index and prices outpace national averages for many items. Here's a snapshot of prices for five items:

Quarter 1, 2005 Price Report	T-Bone Steak	Orange Juice	Lipitor®	Apt Rent, 2 BR	Beauty Salon, Women's Cut
Los Angeles- Long Beach	8.54	4.06	121.68	1501	40.90
San Diego	9.20	3.32	122.38	1522	44.50
San Francisco	9.29	4.37	134.74	2029	55.40
San Jose	9.59	3.99	122.96	1348	53.00
National MEAN	8.43	2.76	114.28	753	28.13

The quarterly ACCRA Cost of Living Index is available by subscription for \$140 per year (print or PDF version) or \$250 per year (electronic version). Send check, payable to ACCRA, P.O. Box 100127, Arlington VA 22210-0407, or subscribe on the Internet at www.coli.org.

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